

REMARKS:

Claims 1-23 are in the case and presented for consideration.

The Examiner has rejected the claims as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. 112, first and second paragraphs.

The claims have been amended in a matter which is believed commensurate with the specification and to avoid the confusing language. The claims are now believed to be sufficiently definite to be examined on the merits.

Further, by this amendment, the application and claims are believed to be in condition for allowance and favorable action is respectfully requested.

Although the Examiner has suggested that specific materials should be defined in the main claim for the layers and for the solution, and that only such defined materials are supported by the specification, it is believed that amended claim 1, as correctly read in conjunction with the specification, satisfied 35 U.S.C. 112. Claim 1 defines for the skilled artisan the nature of the removal solution and the materials of the hard material layer and the intermediate layer and the specification gives ample examples.

The invention is not limited to any one combination of layer materials or removal solutions, but defines the unique method of manufacturing a substrate that initially has a hard material layer with pores, held by an intermediate layer to a hard metal substrate.

The inventors have discovered that a removal solution which dissolves the intermediate layer material more readily than the porous, hard material layer can be used to dissolve at least some of the intermediate layer right through the hard material layer (by virtue of the pores). This sufficiently releases the hard material layer from the hard metal substrate so that the hard material layer can be peeled away from the substrate or simply falls off the substrate, to complete the process.

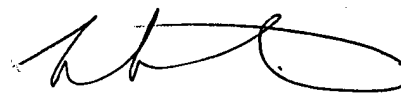
This useful, unique and surprising result is not limited to specific materials other than

those already defined or characterized (e.g. the hard metal substrate and the relative solubility of the layers).

Also, the Examiner has apparently not fully considered all of the dependent claims which do specify materials and other process parameters, in holding that the invention was not sufficiently defined in the claims to allow examination based on the prior art. Each claim, whether independent of dependant, desires full consideration and examination.

Accordingly, examination on the merits and favorable action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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